

It's the We ♥ Animals Issue! Inside: 13 Horse Posters

March/April 2013

American Girl

Celebrating 20 years of fun!

americangirlmagazine.com

4 fun animal quizzes

* Cute **clay**
sea creatures

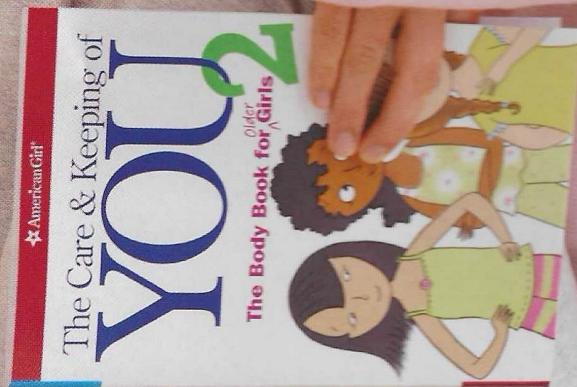
* A girl who tamed
a **wild** mustang

Plus!
How to take
perfect pet pics

New! *The Care & Keeping of You 2*

The **big sister** to our
bestselling body book for girls.

We wanted to bring you expert advice about growing up. That's why we teamed with a trusted pediatrician to create *The Care & Keeping of You 2*! This book is filled with real-girl questions and expert advice about your changing body and mind. Plus, it's geared for girls ages 10 and up.



Discover *The Care & Keeping of You 2* along with the rest of the *Care & Keeping* collection at the **American Girl store** nearest you, online at americangirl.com, or at your local bookstore.

Must be at least 18 years of age to purchase online.

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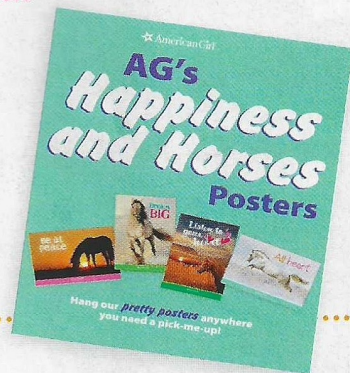
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**Plus AG's Happiness and Horses
Posters**



Safety first!

Some of our projects and activities require an adult's help.

When you see this symbol, be sure to ask an adult to work with you.

Girls

E X P R E S S

Sweeties

Use these delicious decorating ideas to create cute animal cupcakes.



Whiskers: Trimmed pieces of rope licorice, black icing, or sprinkles

Mouth or beak: Small piece of licorice, a peanut-shaped candy, a dab of icing, or a piece of taffy or fruit leather

Eyes: Chocolate chips, chocolate candies, gumdrops, small cookies, chocolate-covered pretzels, snipped marshmallows, or other small candies

Tongue: Trimmed fruit candy, a piece of fruit leather, or a dab of red icing

Fur: Coconut, frosting with nuts in it, crushed cookies or graham crackers, or colored sugar

Ears: Marshmallow pieces with colored sugar, sandwich cookies, gumdrops, vanilla wafers, or curvy chocolate candies

Nose: Trimmed fruit candy or taffy, red hot, chocolate mint, or chocolate malted-milk ball

Feathers: Almond slices, candy corn, or small round candies



Meet an AG Reader

Hannah O.
Age 13, Indiana



I live with...my mom and dad, my little sister, three fish, one cat, and my very own dwarf hamster, Caspien.

My favorite spot in my home is...my room. I have a reading nook, and I also have mirrors and tons of space for dancing.

My favorite funny word: sizzle!

My proudest day was...the day I performed perfectly at my piano recital.

A time I wanted to disappear: when I fell down at a roller rink

My favorite snacks: fresh fruit, popcorn, smoothies, and, believe it or not, pickles

In 20 years, I'll be an architect or interior designer.

My favorite part of AG: I like Help! because girls have questions about the same things I wonder about. I also like the quizzes—my friends and I love to quiz one another at sleepovers.

Introduce Yourself!

To find out how to be a featured reader, go to americangirlmagazine.com/playmagazine

Way Outback

Which Australian animal represents your personality? Take our quiz to find out.

- 1.** Wah-hoo! Spring Break is almost here. You'll probably
a. have a sleepover with a bunch of friends.
b. redo your room.
c. hang out and see what comes up.
- 2.** Flash forward! In 20 years, you'll be famous because you
a. are running a big company.
b. wrote a best-selling mystery.
c. are a popular singer-songwriter.
- 3.** Lights out! Before crawling into bed, you
a. send one last text.
b. doodle in your journal.
c. do some stretches and relax.
- 4.** *Bonjour!* If you spoke a second language fluently, how many people would know?
a. Everyone you know
b. Only your best friend
c. Some friends, some family
- 5.** G'day! What would you do on a dream trip to Australia?
a. Explore a city and meet new people
b. See a performance at the Sydney Opera House
c. Hit the beach

Answers

Mostly a's

You're a kangaroo!

You love talking to people, and your outgoing personality gets you lots of friends. People love knowing what you think.

Mostly b's

You're a wombat!

You're a little shy sometimes, but you're independent and don't mind being on your own. Quiet time gives you your best ideas.

Mostly c's

You're a koala!

You are easygoing, and your friends love your attitude. You don't have to have a plan in order to have a good time.



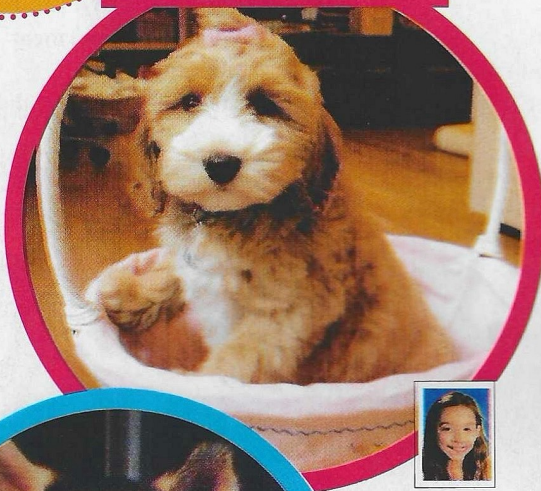
Help us fill our gallery!
Send color copies of
your **original artwork**
or **photos** to the address
on page 7. Sorry, we
can't return entries.

AG Art Gallery

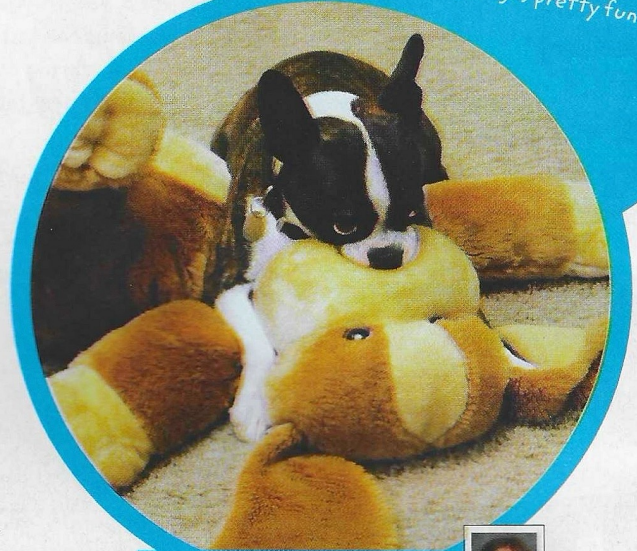
Puppies! Puppies! And a kitty!

"Rufus loves his plush dog! He
always stuffs his dog's nose into his
mouth and just sits there, looking
around. My dog is pretty funny."

Mattie



Isabella R.
Age 11, Oregon



Rufus



Maya O.
Age 11, Washington



Hannah



Sarah S.
Age 8, North Carolina



Violet



Polly W.
Age 9, North Carolina

Juniper



Lily B.
Age 9, Oregon

"Juniper looks like my
other cat, Willow. They
are sisters but do not like
each other—at all!"



Dotty



Elise W.
Age 13, Washington

True Story

The pets at Lily's house are creepy and crawly but still lovable.



Dear American Girl,

When I was little, I thought everyone had pets like mine. Nope. Things are definitely different at my house. My friends think it's cool (and sometimes weird) to visit my family's scorpions, centipedes, friendly millipedes, cockroaches, and soft, fuzzy tarantulas. My dad does educational programs with them. I help out sometimes, like when I talk to kids about our gentle, colorful Greenbottle blue tarantula.

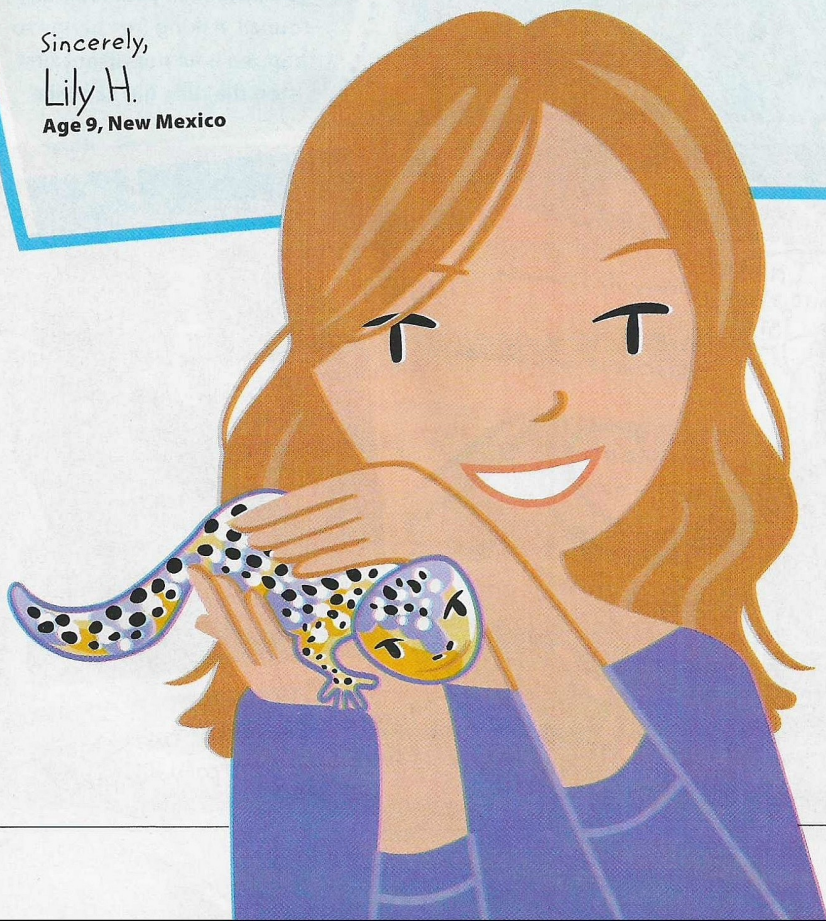
The leopard geckos are my favorite. I like to pet their soft, purple-spotted tails and draw and sculpt them. On the other hand, I don't like mealworms at all, especially when I step out of the shower and spot one inching across the floor. They get fed to the tarantulas, which may explain why they try to sneak off.

If seeing the critters makes someone nervous, I tell her not to worry. My dad keeps them happy and safe in their little homes. I trust him. He loves our beautiful animals, and so do I.

Sincerely,

Lily H.

Age 9, New Mexico



Creative Corner

Pet Place Mat



Cut out card. Flip over for directions.



Answer these questions, and then turn the page to see how your answers compare to those of other AG readers.

If animals could talk, which kind would you talk with?

- * A dog
- * A cat
- * A dolphin
- * A panda

If you were by yourself on an island, what would you do first?

- * Pick pineapples and coconuts
- * Make friends with the animals
- * Build an awesome tree house
- * Design amazing sand sculptures

Pet Place Mat

Laminate a piece of **colorful paper** with self-adhesive **laminating sheets** from an office-supply store. Pet food dishes, fish bowls, or small cages can rest on these easy-to-clean mats. No pet? Put a mat on any surface you want to protect (such as a dresser), or use it as a writing pad at your desk.



AG Poll

What girls told us



The animals girls would talk with are...

38%

a dolphin

34%

a dog

14%

a cat

14%

a panda

The first thing girls would do on a deserted island is to...

58%

build an awesome tree house

24%

make friends with the animals

11%

pick pineapples and coconuts

7%

design amazing sand sculptures

To answer our weekly poll question, go to americangirl.com/playmagazine

Shining Star



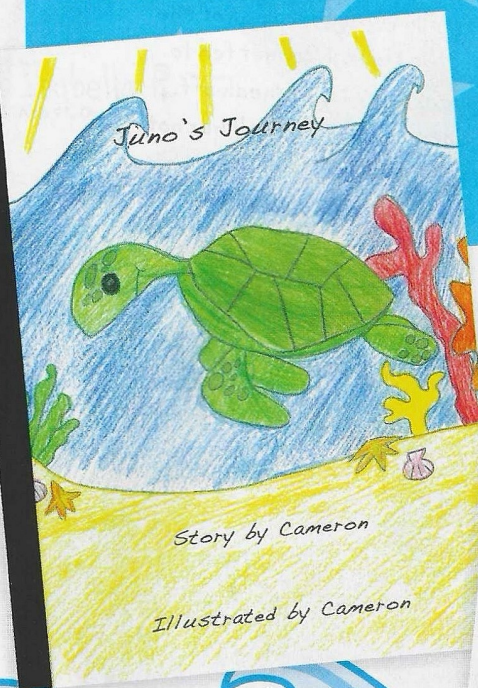
You're never too young to make a difference in the world—that's what nine-year-old Cameron K. believes. The day she saw hundreds of balloons released into the air to celebrate a baseball game, she thought of the sea turtles that could get hurt. "Trash in the ocean, like balloons, looks like jellyfish to a sea turtle," explains Cameron. "That's their favorite food." But eating balloons is really bad for sea turtles.

Cameron convinced her local city council to consider making mass balloon releases against the law. "I like balloons," says Cameron. "But releasing them is littering."

Cameron has also written two books about endangered sea turtles. And she raised \$300 for a sea turtle rescue organization by making and selling chocolate turtles. Why is this Georgia girl so determined to help? "If I wait until I'm grown up to help sea turtles," she says, "it might be too late."

You can shine, too.

If you really believe in something, prepare a small speech and ask a parent to help you approach your local city council. Asking for change to happen is an important first step that any girl can take.



Artwork from one of Cameron's turtle books



Inspecting a nest of turtle eggs with a turtle-patrol volunteer

Draw this Dog!

Follow a few simple steps to doodle Cailee's creative canines.

"I love to draw this dog over and over! The ones I am most proud of are the brown lab and white poodle."



Cailee M.
Age 14, Iowa



1.



2.



3.



4.



Here's our version of Cailee's doodled dog.

Write to Us

Be sure to include your

- * First and last name
- * Address and phone number
- * Birth date, including year
- * School photo or other portrait
- * Parent's signature

Send us a cool envelope! Print our address neatly on the front and your return address on the back.

We can't print every letter, but we read everything you send to us. Hope to hear from you soon! 



Envelope art by
Maggie D.
Age 10, Minnesota

Contest

Kooky Critters

Cute, crawly, and creative—look at these never-before-seen animals!

Pupbee

(Puppy + Bee)



Olivia S.
Age 9, Michigan



Beavowl

(Beaver + Owl)



Olivia H.
Age 10, Louisiana



Panbird

(Panda + Bird)



Caroline V.
Age 10, Ohio

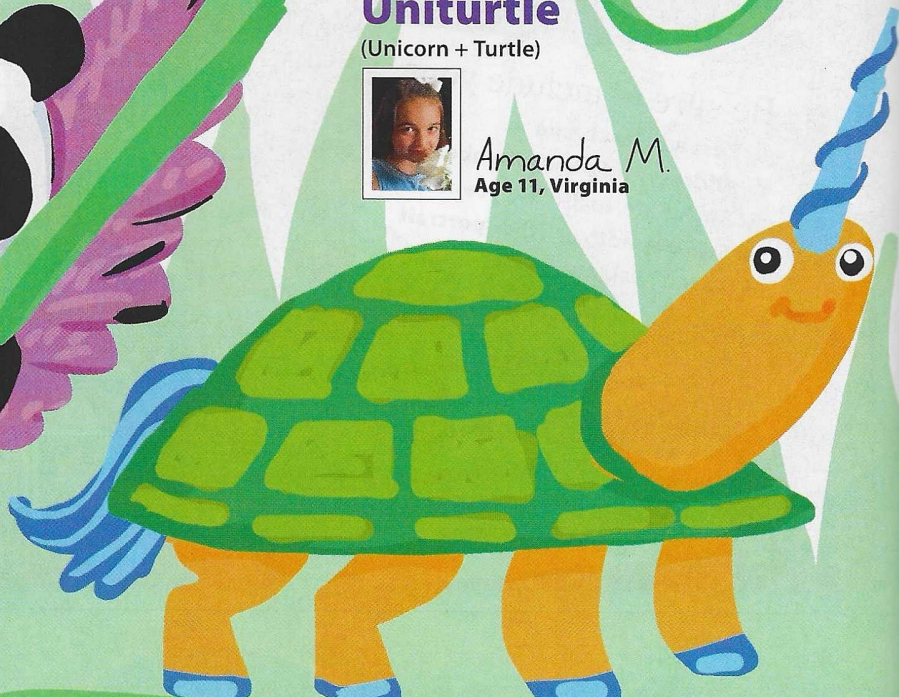


Uniturtle

(Unicorn + Turtle)



Amanda M.
Age 11, Virginia



Mousefly

(Mouse + Butterfly)



Ella S.
Age 12, New York



Zemeleon

(Zebra + Chameleon)



Emily W.
Age 12, Pennsylvania



Elepheal

(Elephant + Seal)



Regina A.
Age 13, California



New Contest: Spooky Self-Portraits

Imagine that you've been asked to create a picture of yourself that will hang in a haunted house. Draw a scary self-portrait that's sure to make people say, "Eeek!" To send us your eerie artwork, go to page 7 and follow the instructions. Postmark deadline: April 10, 2013. Winners will appear in the September/October 2013 issue. Sorry—we can't return entries. ★

Pet Palooza

All about your animal pals!

Your biggest pet responsibilities are...

60%

feeding them.

18%

cleaning them.

15%

walking them.

7%

training them.

Kona hides in funny places—like the **laundry basket!**



Emma B.
Age 12, Illinois

Did you know?

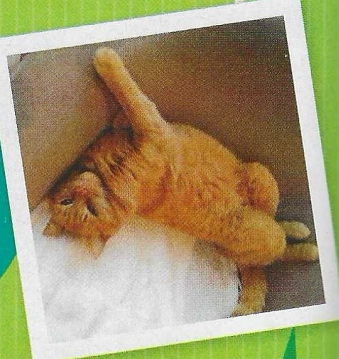
It's not just dogs and cats that cause allergies—hamsters, ferrets, and guinea pigs can, too.



Carrots always sleeps on her back—we call it **"sunbathing."**



Davida R.
Age 11, Virginia

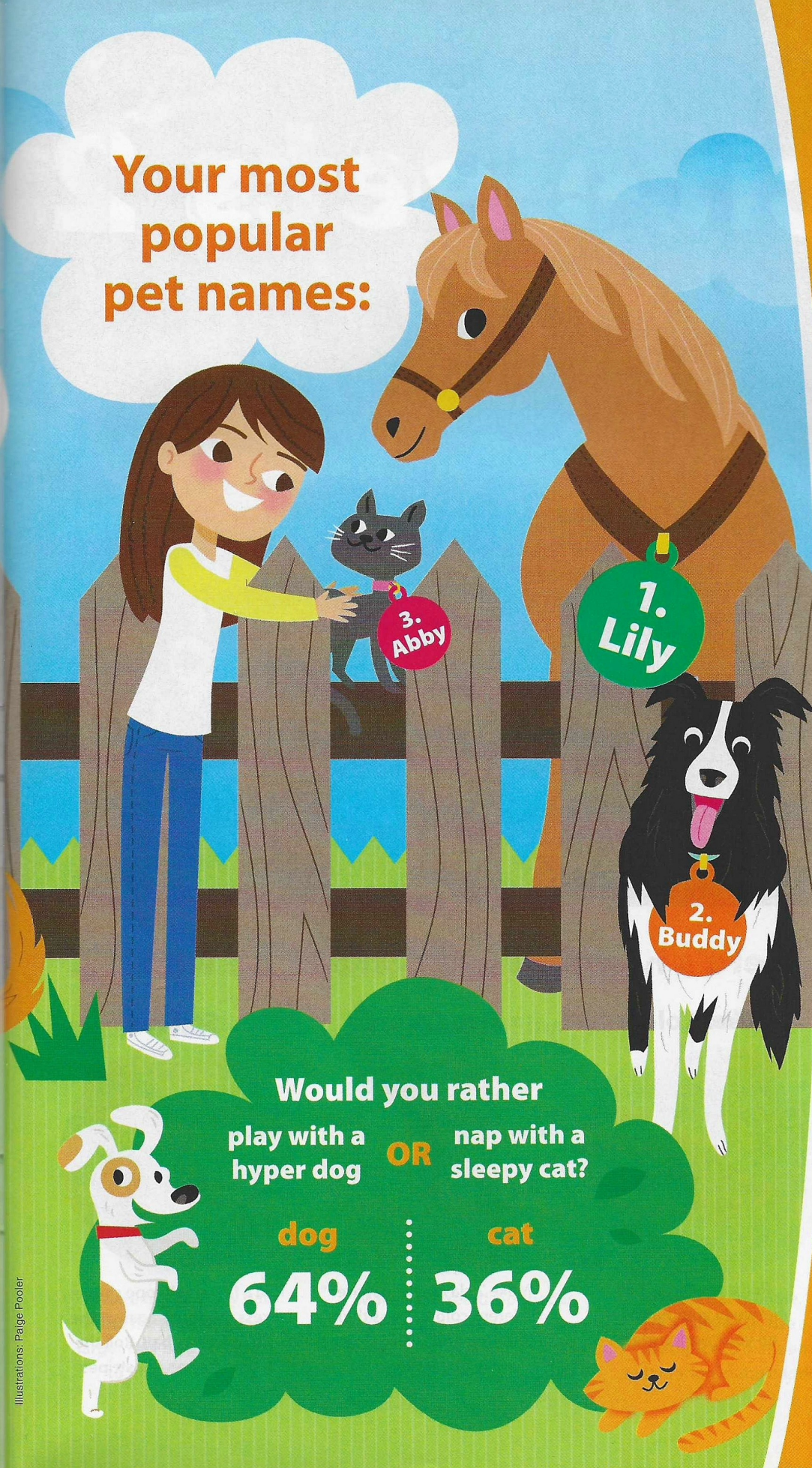


18%:

the percentage of readers who told us they are allergic to at least one kind of pet



Your most popular pet names:



Would you rather

play with a hyper dog **OR** nap with a sleepy cat?

dog

64%

cat

36%

Coming Up: Gossip

Send your answers to one or more of these questions.

- Where do you usually hear gossip?
 - At a friend's house
 - On the bus
 - During recess
 - At lunchtime
 - In the hallway
- The last rumor you heard was
 - completely true.
 - kind of true.
 - not true at all.
- If people whisper about you, usually
 - you shake it off and move on.
 - you're a little red-faced.
 - you want to change schools.
- Be honest—you're more likely to gossip about others **OR** have others gossip about you.
- What's the best way to stop a rumor in its tracks?

Send your answers to the address on page 7, along with your first and last name, address, school or portrait-style photo, and birth date. Postmark deadline: April 10, 2013. Some answers will appear in the September/October 2013 issue. ★

Petite Pets 2:

Make an ocean of clay creatures!



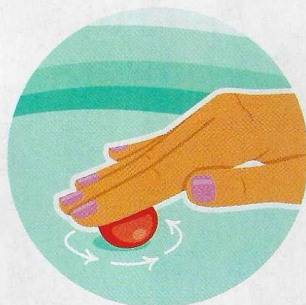
Before you start, cover your work space with wax paper. Then follow these tips to make an undersea pet!

YOU WILL NEED

- * nontoxic air-dry modeling clay
- * toothpick
- * fine-point marker

Here's how to make a creature with . . .

One Color



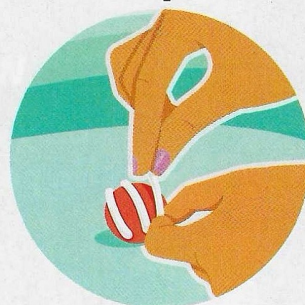
Roll a small clay ball between your hands or on your work surface.

Two Colors



Make 2 clay balls that are different colors. Press them together and roll again to make one larger ball.

Stripes



Roll a few small rope shapes. Press the ropes against the side of a clay ball. Roll the ball to flatten the stripes.

The Sea-quel

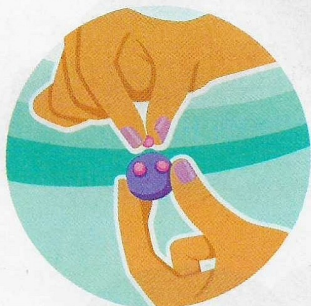


Careful!

These Petite Pets can't really swim, so keep them away from water.

Then add . . .

Spots



Make a few tiny clay balls. Press the tiny balls onto a larger clay ball. Roll the ball to flatten the spots.

Flippers or Fins



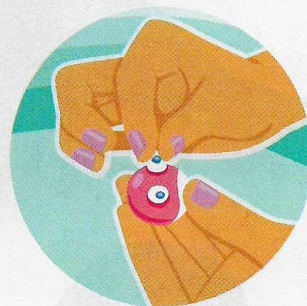
Make 2 flat teardrop shapes for flippers or 2 circles for fins. Press the rounded ends against the animal's body.

Tails



Make a flat triangle. For a whale tail, use a toothpick to make an indentation in the middle.

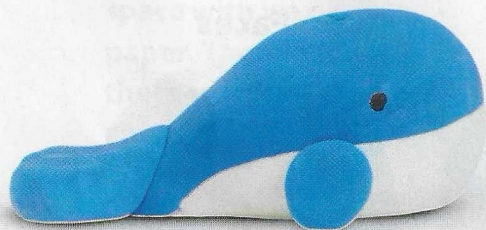
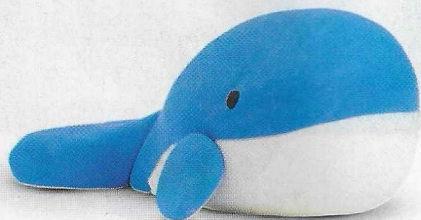
Faces



Make eyes by stacking 2 tiny circles on top of each other. Or, use a marker to draw eyes and mouths.

Whale

1. Make a two-color body. Stretch one end of the body for the tail. Press the body shape against the wax paper to flatten the bottom.
2. Make a whale tail and pinch the corners to shape. Attach the tail to the pointed end of the body.
3. Make fins. Attach them to the whale's sides.
4. Use a toothpick to make a blowhole. Once dry, use a marker to draw eyes.



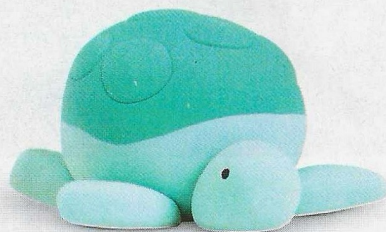
Fish

1. Make a body with stripes.
2. Make 2 fins. Attach to the sides of the body.
3. Make a tail. Add texture using the side of a toothpick. Attach the tail to the body.
4. For the top fin, roll a small rope that's as long as the body. Flatten the rope and attach it to the top of the fish. Use your fingers to shape the fin.
5. Make clay eyes and a mouth. Attach the pieces to the face. Let dry. Add details using a marker.



Sea Turtle

1. Make a two-color body with a few spots.
2. Make 2 flippers and 2 small rectangles for legs. Then make a small oval for the head and roll a tiny rope for the tail.
3. Arrange the flippers, legs, head, and tail on wax paper. Place the body on top and press down to make the pieces stick. Let dry.
4. Use a marker to draw eyes.



Octopus

1. Make a body with spots.
2. For the tentacles, make 4 long ropes with one color and 4 long ropes with another color. Press one rope of each color together and roll them so you have 4 ropes total.
3. Lay the 4 ropes in a row so the top color is the same as the body. Pinch the ropes together in the middle.
4. Press the body on top of the pinched section of tentacles so everything sticks together.
5. Use your fingers to shape or twist the tentacles. Add clay eyes. Let dry. Draw a mouth using a marker.



Crab

1. Roll 2 clay balls, one white and one a color. Slightly flatten each ball.
2. Roll 3 thin ropes for legs. Lay the ropes across the top of the white ball. Press the colored ball on top. Bend each leg toward the body and pinch each one in the middle.
3. Make a short, thin rope for an arm and 2 small balls for a claw. Press one end of the arm between the two claw halves. Press the other end of the arm against the crab's body and fold in the arm. Repeat to make another arm and claw.
4. Add clay eyes. Let dry. Use a marker to draw a mouth.



There's more!

Visit americangirl.com/playmagazine to learn how to make a mini dolphin. ★

Here's How

Take Great Pet Pics

Learn how to take better pictures of your animal friends!

by Kristi Thom



Your Pet Is the Star

A simple background keeps the focus on your pet. Before you start, clear away clutter or put your pet somewhere without a lot of stuff around.



Pic Tip.
Zooming in on your pet gets rid of most of the background, too.

Special Effects

Ask an adult to help you make your photos more artistic. If you use a smartphone, download an app to add effects. Or use your computer's photo software to turn a color photo black and white.



Pic Tip.

Make a duplicate of your photo before you start changing it so that you still have the original.

Keep Little Pets in Focus

Set up the area where you plan to put your pet. Use a stuffed animal that's about the same size as your pet as a stand-in. Take a picture of it and see how it looks. Adjust the focus or the lighting if necessary. When you're ready, swap in your pet and take the picture.

Pic Tip.

A small treat to eat will help keep your pet still while you take his picture.



Get Your Pet's Attention

Find a friend or sibling to be your assistant. When you're ready to take a picture, ask her to squeak a pet toy above your head. Your pet will look toward the sound, and you'll get a cute expression in the photo. For dogs, this trick works best with older or calmer pups—excitable dogs might not sit still for the camera.



Pic Tip.

This usually works best the first or second time you try it. After that, your pet might get bored.



Turn Off the Flash

Many pets don't like the camera's flash, so take your photos outside or in a well-lit room.



Pic Tip.

If you don't use the flash, your pet won't have weirdly glowing eyes in the pictures.

Show Some Personality

To capture your pet's spirit, get a picture of him doing something he loves. That might be swimming, running, climbing—or even sleeping!

Pic Tip.

Keep your camera handy so that you can get great photos when you see your pet doing something cute.



Brighten Up

Color will make your photos pop. Take a picture of your pet on a bright blanket or in front of a colorful wall.



Pic Tip.

An easy way to have a colorful, patterned background in your photo is to put your pet on a bright beach towel.

Now that you're an expert pet photographer, share your best shots with us! Send your pics to the address on page 7. ★

Go Wild!

Which animals match your personality?
Take these mini quizzes and find out.

Your bedroom is like...

1. On most days, you're wearing

- a. a pretty scarf.
- b. a pair of earbuds.
- c. a multicolored bracelet.

2. Your idea of a perfect birthday party is

- a. baking cookies and other warm treats with friends.
- b. a dance marathon.
- c. one with balloons, confetti, and lots of decorations.

3. You have a secret, so you

- a. write about it in your journal.
- b. tell only a couple of friends you trust.
- c. draw a picture that represents your feelings.

4. Your locker is

- a. organized—no loose papers, and there's a spot for each book.
- b. messy—stuff is crammed to the top, and it can be hard to find things.
- c. nice to look at—lots of favorite pictures are hanging inside.

5. When you feel nervous, how do you calm down?

- a. Sit in a peaceful place, close your eyes, and breathe
- b. Play a game against a friend on the computer
- c. Work on a craft project

Go to
page 21 for
answers.

You and your friends are like...



1. A few girls said something unkind to you and your friends. How would you all react?

- a. We'd ignore the comment.
- b. We'd grin and crack a couple of jokes.
- c. We'd walk away together.

2. Pretend that you've never met your friends. If they didn't exist, you might

- a. get caught up in gossip or other problems.
- b. not laugh as much.
- c. have trouble finding people to lean on.

3. If you're new to a group or club, you might say hi to someone who seems

- a. quiet and nice.
- b. friendly and talkative.
- c. kind and trustworthy.

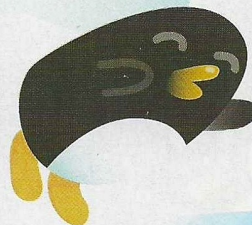
4. There's a big school project due, and you and your pals are working on it together. You

- a. create a schedule for your group.
- b. brainstorm fun ways to present the information.
- c. make sure each girl has an equal amount of work—that way, everything is fair.

5. When you're upset about something, how do your friends make you feel better?

- a. They help me get my mind off the problem—sleepover, anyone?
- b. They say things that are sure to make me smile.
- c. They listen to me vent, and I ask them for advice.

Go to
page 21 for
answers.



Your style is...

1. When you babysit, you keep the child entertained by

- a. coloring pictures with her.
- b. playing a new game.
- c. making up a sweet story.

2. How do you get ready for a test?

- a. Highlight important things in your notes
- b. Study a different way each time, just to mix things up
- c. Grab your book and review it in a comfy chair

3. On the front of your notebook for school are

- a. lots of glittery stickers.
- b. random doodles.
- c. pictures of cute, fuzzy animals.

4. Which pair of shoes would you love to wear?

- a. Rainbow-colored sneakers
- b. Patterned ballet flats
- c. Soft, warm moccasins

5. When you start reading a new book, you like

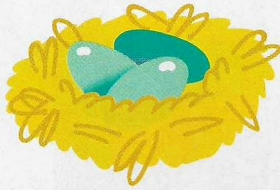
- a. looking at the illustrations.
- b. knowing that none of your friends have read it yet.
- c. wrapping up in a blanket and reading it on a quiet afternoon.

Go to
page 21 for
answers.



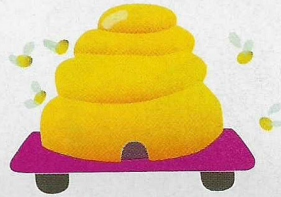
Answers

Your bedroom is like...



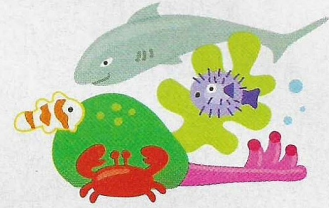
Mostly a's: a bird's nest.

Your room is a cozy spot where you can land at the end of a long day. Everything is in order, and you like to make things look just right. To you, your room is the safest place in the world.



Mostly b's: a beehive.

Bzzz. Those aren't bees—that's all the noise that's coming from your room! Your bedroom is a busy place, filled with music, video games, and giggling friends. And there's a swarm of posters and pictures all over your walls.



Mostly c's: a coral reef.

Coral reefs are colorful places that are full of life—that's a good way to describe your bedroom, too. It has lots of splashy colors, stuffed animals, and fun keepsakes that remind you of your best memories.

You and your friends are like...



Mostly a's: a colony of penguins.

Calm, cool, and collected, nothing ruffles your feathers. When drama is everywhere and no one can seem to chill out, you and your friends slide on by as if nothing is wrong. Way to stay above the chatter!



Mostly b's: a pod of dolphins.

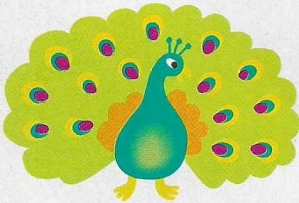
Your group of pals is energetic, friendly, and cheerful. You all "swim" through your school with smiles on your faces and laughs that can be heard through the halls. In an ocean of frowns, you and your friends inspire others to be happy.



Mostly c's: a group of prairie dogs.

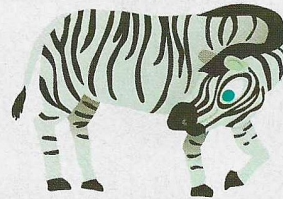
Prairie dog families stick close together and look out for one another—just like you and your friends! Whenever you have a problem, you can count on your pals to pop up and make you feel better. Keep standing strong with your friends.

Your style is...



Mostly a's: colorful, like a peacock.

Peacocks love to show off their flashy feathers, and that sounds a lot like you! Whether you're wearing head-to-toe bright colors or sparkly jewelry, you're a girl who stands out in a crowd.



Mostly b's: bold, like a zebra.

If a shirt has a pattern on it, it's probably in your closet—stripes, polka dots, leopard prints, you name it. You feel good wearing clothes that are interesting and one-of-a-kind.



Mostly c's: comfortable, like a panda.

A panda's fur is super soft, just like your comfy sweaters and pants. Your relaxed wardrobe is perfect for lounging on the couch or snuggling with a pet. ★



Hearts

and

Hooves

What a wild mustang taught Brooke
about patience, trust, and friendship

N

ot many kids my age get to ride a mustang every day. It's like floating on air. My mustang, Jacuzzi, has a long, thick black mane that blows in the wind. Even though he's not wild anymore, when I'm on his back, I feel like I'm riding wild and free.

I was a horse girl long before I met Jacuzzi. My mom has been a horse trainer since before I was born. When I was little, she rode in a saddle that had a seat for us both. When I was three, I got Apple Gray, the tan and white pony who "raised" me. We live on a farm in Pennsylvania in a lush, green valley surrounded by mountains. If I was going to draw a picture of where I live, I'd pick a cherry-red crayon for the barns, lots of bright green for the grass, white for the fences, and tan for my house.

I go to school every day just like other kids. After school and homework, I pull my hair back and change into my riding

clothes. If I'm going to ride in my big western saddle, I put on my jeans, boots, and spurs. If I'm going to practice jumping, I put on my riding britches and paddock boots.

I compete in horse shows in both English and western riding. I also help my mom give lessons and make training videos. Sometimes we head into the mountains on trail rides just for fun. I also help take care of the 25 or so horses on the farm, cleaning out stalls, filling water buckets, and scooping grain at feeding time. When we get ready for a show, I'm in charge of packing the horse trailer with supplies and tack.

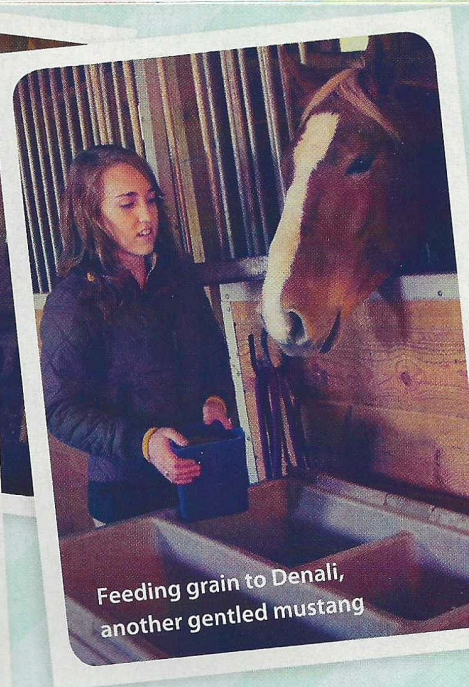
F

our years ago, my mom won a competition that involved taming a mustang. The next year, when I was nine, I wanted to try. It works like this: The organizers want to help wild mustangs find homes. When you sign up for the competition, they send you a horse that has never been handled by people. You get 90 days to train the horse.

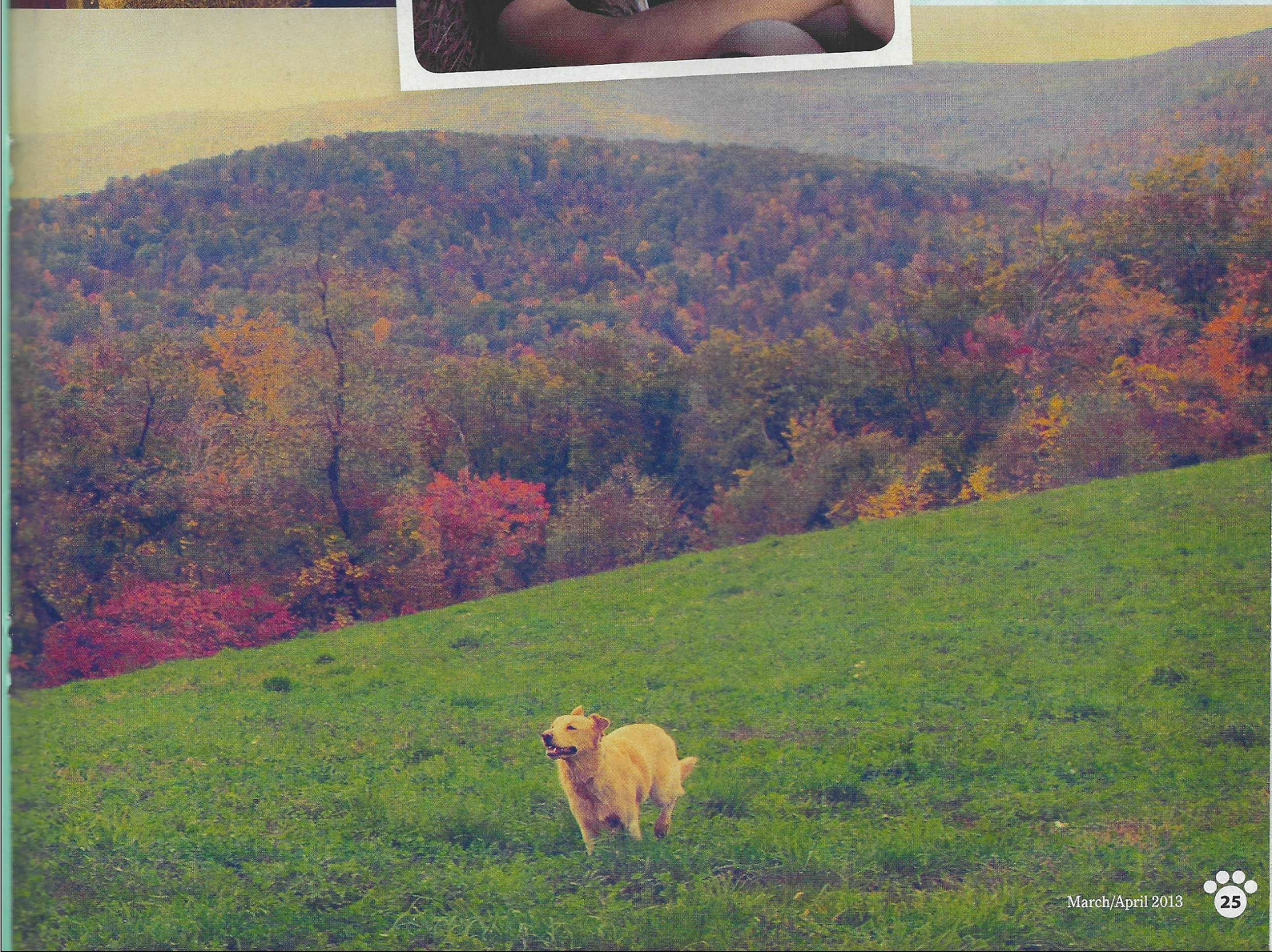
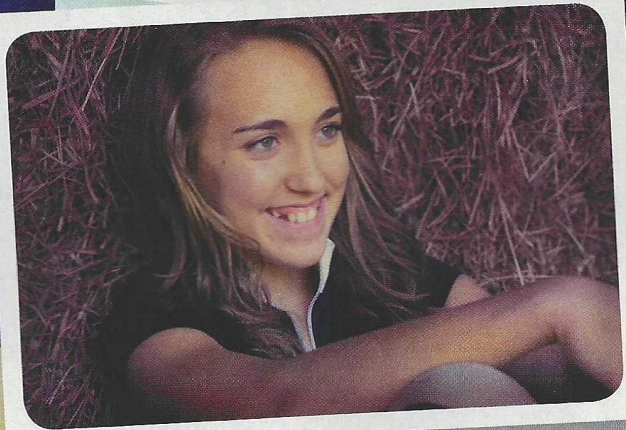
Jacuzzi and me and our dog Zoey out for a run



Some hay for
the horses

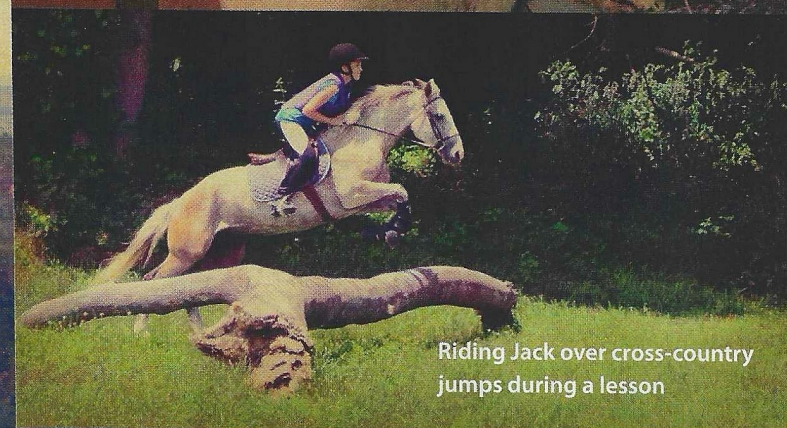


Feeding grain to Denali,
another gentled mustang

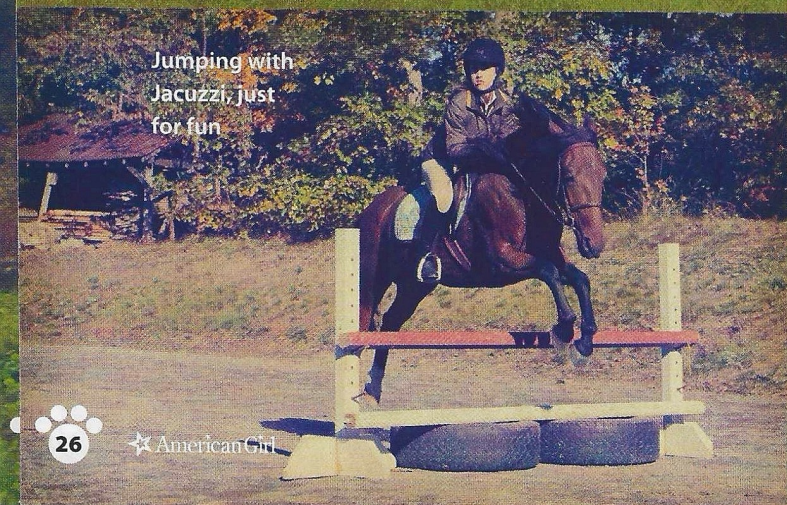




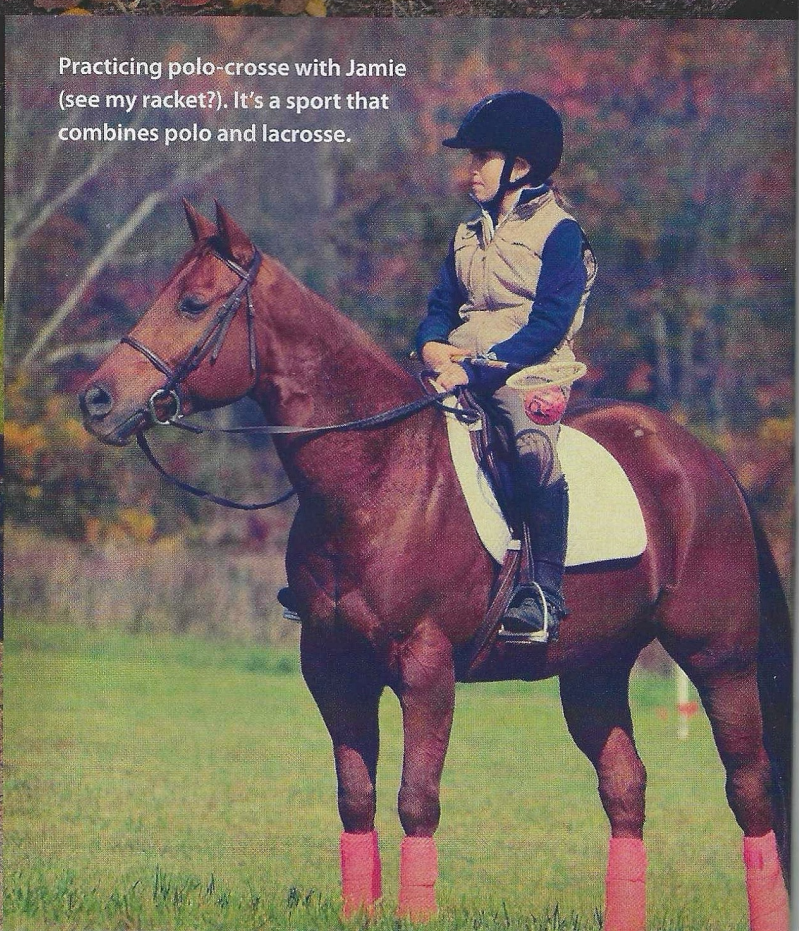
Jacuzzi, just hanging out



Riding Jack over cross-country jumps during a lesson



Jumping with Jacuzzi, just for fun



Practicing polo-crosse with Jamie (see my racket?). It's a sport that combines polo and lacrosse.

Jacuzzi doing one of the tricks I taught him—lying down



Getting ready for a ride



Then you travel to a show where a judge decides who did the best job gentling a mustang. Gentling means getting the horse used to being handled. After the competition, the mustangs are sold to new owners.

The day Jacuzzi arrived at our farm, all I knew was that he was a yearling (one year old) and that he had come from a herd of wild mustangs in Nevada, more than 2,000 miles away. When I say “wild,” I mean really wild. Like you could not get close to him or touch him. He was scared and jittery.

I named him right away. I don’t know why I named him “Jacuzzi.” I just liked that word. During our first few weeks together, that horse wanted nothing to do with me. Jacuzzi seemed to think I might eat him. I took everything slow so that I didn’t scare him.

Our training sessions started in a small, round pen. I used a long, narrow plastic pipe that extended my arm, getting him used to being touched. After a while he stopped running away. Little by little, we bonded. I was able to get closer to him. Before long, he was actually happy to see me. Soon he let me touch him with my hand and even brush him. Sometimes I’d stand by his bucket and watch him eat.

Things began to click. He seemed to like his work. He’d look at me like, “OK, Mom. What do you want me to do?” I trained him to wear a halter and follow me on a lead rope. At just a year old, he was too young to learn to be ridden yet. So I taught him tricks such as “sit,” “kneel,” “bow,” and “lie down.” He taught me things along the way, too. Like how important it is to be aware of how others feel, like with friends. I was the

first person Jacuzzi ever trusted.

Then my family traveled to Tennessee for the mustang competition. I wanted Jacuzzi to do well. But I also wanted to keep my horse. When I asked my parents if we could buy him at the auction after the competition, they said, “Maybe.” We had no idea how much he would cost once the bidding started.

When it was our turn in the show ring, we performed a series of skills and tricks to demonstrate how well—and how willingly—he could do his job. We won the youth division!

The other good news was that the show organizers allowed youth competitors to buy their mustangs before the auction. Can you guess what I did with my prize money? Yes! My dad and I were first in line. Then we all went home to Pennsylvania.



year after the competition, I finally got to ride my horse. He was two years old by then and grown up enough to carry a rider. The first time I got on his back, he was an absolute gem.

Jacuzzi’s four years old now, and I’m 12. He is always watching me or following me around. If I walk out to the field and call him, he comes running. If he’s in the barn, he nickers whenever I walk in. Jacuzzi brings so much joy to my life. I love that little thing. And no matter what, he never gave up on me. He never gave up on us. ★

Animal Crackers

These sweets and treats may have animal names, but they're just for you!

Animal Crackers

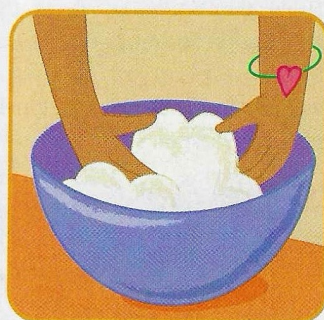
 Make these cute crunchers for an on-the-go snack!

YOU WILL NEED

- * 6 tablespoons butter, softened
- * ¼ cup granulated sugar
- * ¼ cup brown sugar
- * 1 tablespoon powdered milk
- * ¼ teaspoon salt
- * 1 teaspoon vanilla
- * 1 egg
- * 1½ cups flour



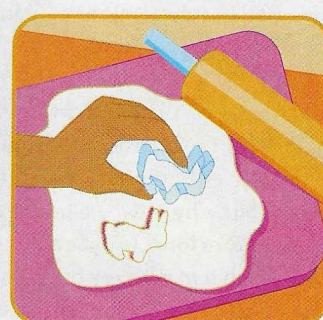
1. In a medium bowl, cream together the butter, sugars, powdered milk, and salt.



2. Add the vanilla, egg, and half the flour. Stir until combined. Add remaining flour and mix again. You may need to mix the dough with your clean hands.



3. Shape the dough into a ball and place on a lightly floured cutting board. Use a rolling pin to flatten the dough until it's about ¼-inch thick.



4. Use mini cookie cutters to cut out animal shapes. Place the shapes on a parchment-lined cookie sheet. Ask an adult to bake the crackers at 350 degrees for 8–10 minutes. Let cool.

Grasshopper Shake

 This minty dessert will put a spring in your step.

Put $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups mint chocolate-chip ice cream in a blender. Ask an adult to blend until smooth. Remove the pitcher from the blender. Then stir in 2 crushed chocolate-sandwich cookies. Before serving the shake, drizzle some chocolate syrup down the inside of a glass. Pour the shake into the glass and top with whipped cream. Serves 1–2.

Frozen Purple Cow

 Mix up a pretty purple drink!

Put 5 tablespoons milk, 2 tablespoons frozen grape juice concentrate, and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup vanilla ice cream in a blender. Ask an adult to blend well. Add 3–4 ice cubes and ask an adult to blend again. Pour into a glass and top with whipped cream. Serves 1.

Great Ants

Try a tasty version of a simple snack:

- * **Ants-on-a-log:** Spread celery with peanut butter and add raisins.
- * **Fire-ants-on-a-log:** Spread celery with chocolate-hazelnut spread and add dried cranberries.
- * **Beetles-on-a-log:** Spread celery with cream cheese and add dried blueberries.



Monkey Bread Muffins

 Bake a special breakfast treat to share at a sleepover.

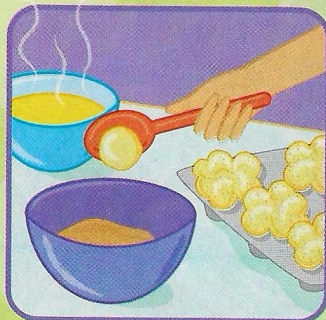
YOU WILL NEED

- * 1 stick butter
- * 6 tablespoons sugar
- * 1½ tablespoons cinnamon
- * 2 (7.5 oz.) cans refrigerated biscuit dough



1. Ask an adult to melt the butter in the microwave. Let cool slightly. Mix the sugar and cinnamon together in another bowl.

2. Open the biscuit-dough cans and separate each biscuit (there should be 10 per can). On a cutting board, use a butter knife to cut each biscuit into 4 pieces. Roll each piece into a ball.



3. Fill a muffin tin with foil muffin liners. Dip each dough ball into the butter, then roll it in the cinnamon mixture. Place 5–7 dough balls in each muffin cup. Pour the extra melted butter over each muffin.

4. Ask an adult to bake the muffins at 375 degrees for 15–20 minutes. Let cool slightly. Serves 12.



Pigs-in-a-Blanket

 Wrap up these snacks to share at a party.

Start with 1 (8 oz.) can of refrigerated crescent roll dough. Separate and unroll each dough triangle. Roll each dough triangle around a hot dog and your choice of filling.

Place the wrapped hot dogs on a baking sheet. Ask an adult to bake them in a 375-degree oven for 10–15 minutes. Let cool slightly before eating.



Here are some filling ideas:

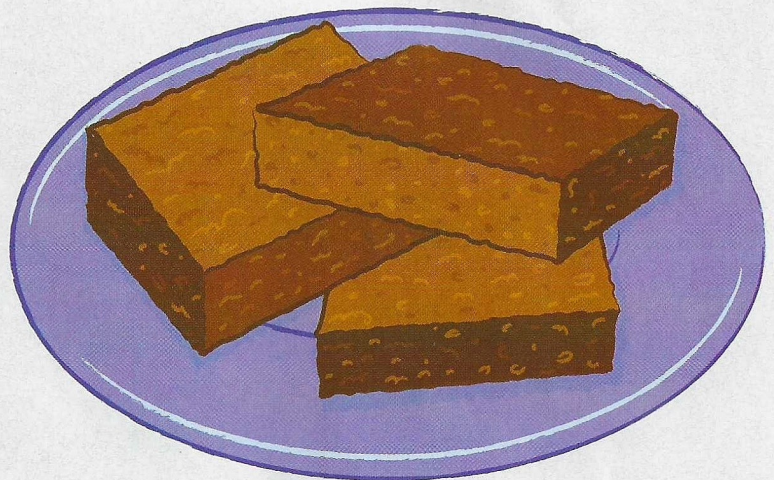
- * A hot dog and a spoonful of macaroni and cheese.
- * A hot dog with a spoonful of chili.
- * A hot dog wrapped in pepperoni slices and sprinkled with mozzarella cheese. Serve with marinara sauce.

Birdseed Bars

 Your friends will flock to these crispy, crunchy granola bars.

YOU WILL NEED

- * ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- * 1 cup crisp rice cereal
- * ¾ cup rolled oats
- * ½ cup shredded coconut
- * ¼ cup flax seeds
- * ¼ cup sunflower seeds, shelled
- * ⅓ cup peanut butter
- * 1 teaspoon vanilla
- * ⅓ cup honey
- * 2 tablespoons brown sugar



1. Mix together the cocoa powder, cereal, oats, coconut, and seeds in a large bowl.



2. In a separate microwave-safe bowl, mix together the peanut butter, vanilla, honey, and brown sugar. Ask an adult to heat the mixture in a microwave for about 1 minute (or until the mixture starts to melt).



3. Ask an adult to pour the melted peanut-butter mixture over the cereal mixture. Stir together until the cereal mixture is completely coated.



4. Spread the mixture into a greased 8-by-8-inch pan. Let cool about 1 hour. Cut into squares. ★

A Picasso Original

by Jessie Haas

You can read
more about Saige
in *Saige* and
*Saige Paints
the Sky*.



Saige and her friend try to teach an old horse a new trick.

Mom called from the front step, “Saige! Hurry!”

“Sam! Hurry!” I echoed from halfway up the street. I tugged on the leash, but my dog, Sam, a shaggy black and white Border-collie mix, ignored me. He was too busy sniffing a telephone pole, reading the message left by some other dog. You can’t hurry that.

I looked up at the huge, deep, brilliant blue sky. New Mexico has so much sky, it makes everything else seem tiny. A yellow hot-air balloon drifted overhead, the perfect accent. Albuquerque is the hot-air balloon capital of the world. My dad is a commercial airplane pilot and a certified balloon pilot—and fanatic.

“C’mon Sam, let’s go,” I urged, running for home with Sam racing alongside me. I didn’t want to be late for school!

After a quick breakfast, I heaved my backpack onto my shoulders and gave Sam’s head a quick pat. “See you this afternoon,” I promised him.

I got to school just as my best friend, Tessa, was getting off the bus. We hadn’t seen each other for a week because Tessa had been away at music camp.

“Hi!” I said, grinning broadly.

“Saige!” Tessa called happily.

“How was camp?” I asked.

“It was awesome!” she declared. “We sang for four hours a day!”

I followed Tessa through the school doors and into the hallway. Blank beige walls and lockers stretched as far as the eye could see. Two weeks ago the walls were lined with our artwork: cactus drawings; paintings of the brilliant pink Sandia Mountains at sunset;

and balloons, balloons, balloons. The art went home with us at the end of the term and left the walls bare, an empty desert.

“I can’t wait till the new artwork starts to go up,” I said, quickening my step.

Tessa gave me a pitying look. “Saige, don’t be such a space cadet,” she teased. “We don’t have art this term. We have music!”

I stared at her, suddenly feeling crushed. How could I have forgotten something this bad, even for a minute? In Albuquerque, public elementary schools have an art teacher one term and a music teacher the next—never both at the same time. The school system can’t afford it.

“Sorry,” Tessa said, giving me a quick smile. “But does it really matter? You paint every afternoon with Mimi. Anyway, we do get to have music.”

Mimi is my grandma. Her real name is Miriam, but everyone calls her “Mimi,” and she’s a pretty well-known artist in our community. Tessa was right: I do paint with my artist-grandmother almost every day. And we do get music this term, and music is fun. But there’s nothing about school that I love as much as art. Before the first class had even started I couldn’t wait for the school day to end so that I could take my troubles to Mimi.

I rode the bus to Mimi’s house and walked up the driveway. “Hello!” I called toward the adobe ranch house.

A moment later Mimi appeared at the doorway, sweeping a wide-brimmed hat off her head. “Good!” she said. That’s what Mimi always says when she

sees me: Good!

"Not good," I said. "We don't have art this term!"

"Is that right?" Mimi asked, twisting her long brown-streaked-with-gray hair up into a bun. She glanced under her arm at me. "Did we know that was coming? I can't remember."

"I guess I knew," I admitted, "but I forgot."

Mimi took off her glasses and wiped away the dust. "So, no art," she said. "Do you want to try and do something about it?"

I stared at Mimi. Do something—other than just moping? "Like what?" I asked.

"Get the PTA to help with the arts fiesta," Mimi said promptly. Mimi and her Oil Painters Society were planning a neighborhood fiesta to raise money for arts in the community. "Maybe we could have volunteers teach after-school art classes during the off terms, when your school doesn't have an art teacher," Mimi said. "We would need supplies, and we'd probably need to pay a regular teacher or two to stay and supervise. The money we raise can help with that, but if the PTA joins us, we can raise more money."

"When would we start having classes?" I asked, suddenly feeling excited. "And who's going to teach?"

"Whoa, slow down," Mimi said. "We have to raise the money first. A bake sale would be a good project for the PTA to take on. Your mom's a member, right? Maybe you can talk with her about it."

"O . . . K," I sighed, feeling deflated again. Bake sales are all right, but not nearly as much fun as art class.

Mimi must have heard the uncertainty in my voice. "You need a dose of horse," she said, "and then we'll get to work painting."

I followed her out to the shady three-sided shed where the horses were sheltered from the heat of the day. When I stepped in among them, Picasso turned

his head toward me politely. He blew his warm, sweet breath over my face, making my skin prickle. His almond-shaped eyes looked wise and kind.

I reached up under Picasso's long white mane and gave him a scratch.

"Hey, he's sweaty!" I said, glancing at his sides. Picasso is white, flecked all over with dark speckles. Today the hair on his back was rough and damp. "You were riding him?" I asked. Usually Mimi rides the younger horses, who are all still in training.

Mimi said, "Picasso and I are coming out of retirement for the fiesta. We're going to dust off some of our old rodeo tricks."

I raised my eyebrows. Mimi is a young-looking and young-acting grandmother, but she's over 60, and Picasso is 27, which is pretty old for a horse. When they were younger, Mimi did trick riding on him. I'd seen pictures of Picasso galloping around an arena while Mimi stood in the saddle or leaned down to pick a handkerchief off the ground. There's even a picture of her jumping him, bareback and without a bridle, through a flaming hoop.

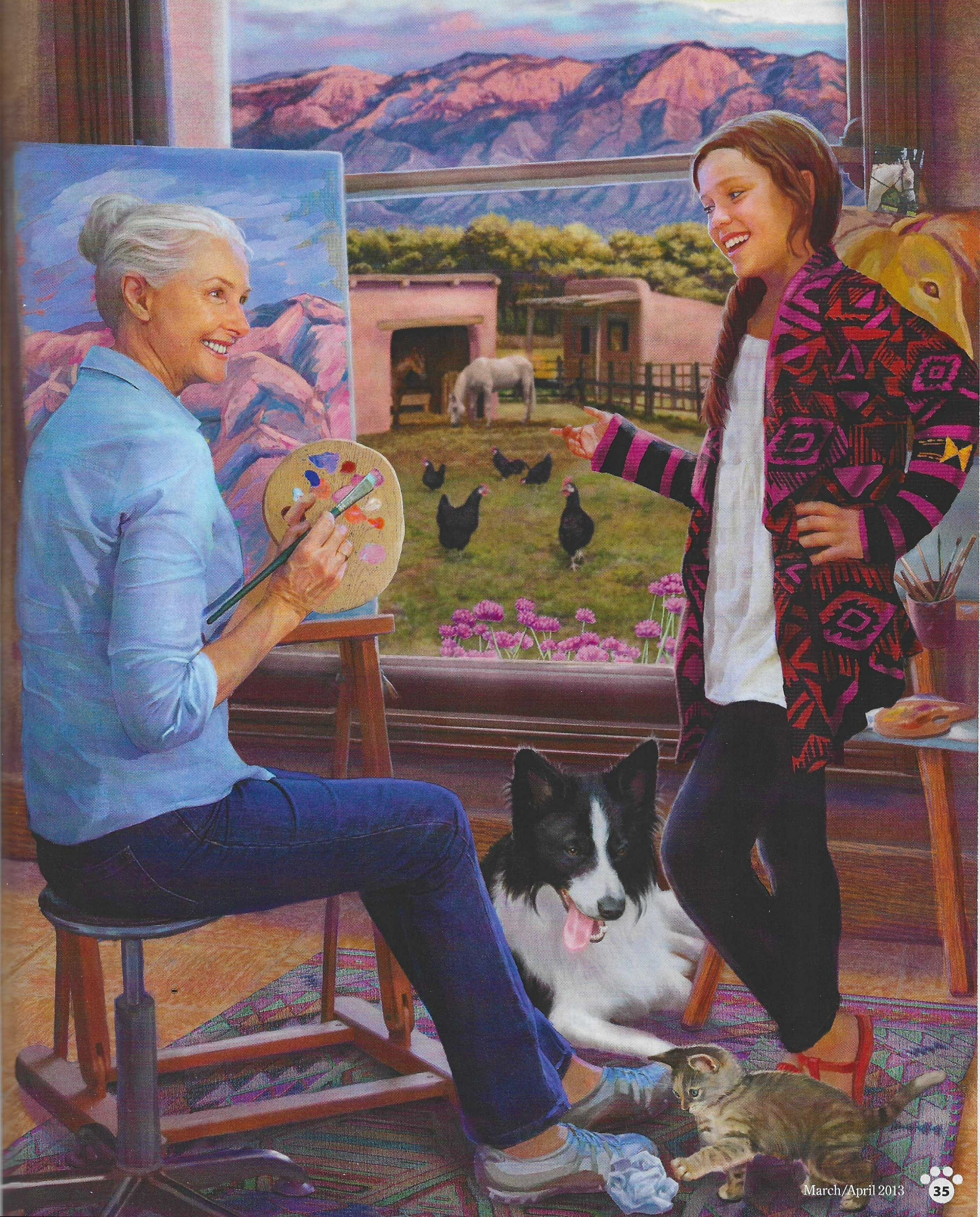
"Really? The flaming hoop and everything?" I asked.

Mimi shook her head regretfully. "We'll do something a lot less dangerous," she explained. "We're not quite the athletes we used to be. There's a parade, too. Do you want to lead the parade on Picasso?"

"Lead the parade?" That sounded scary, to be out there in front of the crowd all by myself.

"Picasso is the most experienced parade horse around here," Mimi said. "Don't you think he belongs in the lead?"

I looked deep into Picasso's eyes. I've ridden him since I was very small, and he takes care of me. Plus he's beautiful. If I rode him in the parade, people wouldn't be looking at me. They'd be looking at Picasso.



"I'd like that," I answered.

Mimi smiled. "Good! He'd like it too," she said, patting Picasso's side.

During the next week, Mimi taught me how to ride in a parade. I didn't expect parade riding to be so much harder than regular riding, but it was. Picasso and I had to learn how to communicate differently with each other, and it was taking lots of practice.

happened?" I asked, almost screaming the words.

Carmen pulled me into a warm hug. "She's going to be OK, Saige," she said soothingly. "Mimi will be OK. She fell in her studio. I think she's hurt her arm and her hip."

In the doorway behind Luis, men appeared carrying a stretcher—carrying Mimi. When she saw me, her eyes focused a little. "Good!" she whispered. "Luis and Carmen will take care of you."

The medics loaded her into the back of the ambulance. One climbed in beside her, one

I felt as if the air had been sucked out of my lungs.

On Monday, when I was on the bus to Mimi's, I was so deep in thought about Picasso's parade gait that I almost didn't notice when a siren shrieked behind us. The bus pulled to the side of the road, and an ambulance passed, going fast. As the bus pulled onto the road again, I realized we were almost at Mimi's.

When we got to my stop, the driver leaned forward, staring out his side window at Mimi's driveway. He said something as I got out, but I didn't catch it. I crossed in front of the bus and stopped at the edge of the road, confused.

The ambulance was in Mimi's yard, red lights flashing, doors wide open. Luis and Carmen, Mimi's neighbors, stood next to it. For a second I just stood there. I couldn't move. It felt as if all the air had been sucked out of my lungs.

When my feet finally took off, I sprinted up the driveway, but my brain still couldn't process what was going on. "What happened? Carmen, what

hopped behind the wheel, and then they were gone. A moment later, Mom's car pulled into the driveway. I ran to the passenger door as Mom spoke to Luis and Carmen through her open window. As I buckled my seat belt, Mom reached over to squeeze my hand. Then she turned the car around, and we took off down the road, much faster than we usually drive.

When we reached the hospital, we met Dad in the waiting room. He looked anxious. "How is she?" he asked.

Mom started to fill him in, but just then a doctor appeared in the doorway and explained what was going on. Mimi had broken her wrist and her femur, the bone in her thigh, just below the hip.

"That's good news," the doctor said. "A broken hip would have been much more serious. We'll need to put a pin in. We've scheduled the operation for first thing tomorrow."

Mimi's surgery went well, but the news wasn't all good. Because Mimi had broken an arm and a leg, her doctor thought her recovery would be complicated, especially without anyone at home to help.

When we saw Mimi later that day, I offered to stay with her once she left the hospital.

"Out of the question," Mimi said. "I'll need help twenty four hours a day for a while. I will go to the rehab center and let the professionals get me going. Anyway, Saige," she told me, "you'll have plenty to do keeping the fiesta on track."

The fiesta. I hadn't been thinking about that. How could Picasso and I possibly lead the parade without Mimi there? And would there even be a fiesta without Mimi's trick riding? It was the main act! My hopes for the after-school arts program whooshed out of me like air from a balloon.

I didn't know how to keep the fiesta going all by myself until I saw my new friend Gabi. She had just moved to my neighborhood and I'd discovered that she was really good at training animals. Maybe the show could go on.

"Could you teach Picasso some tricks?" I asked Gabi when I saw her at school the next day. "Mimi can't do her act for the fiesta. Picasso is so smart. Maybe we can teach him some new tricks!"

At first Gabi was speechless. Then I saw the spark of excitement in her eyes, too. "Sure," she said. "We don't have a ton of time, but . . . yes, we can try!"

That afternoon Gabi rode the bus with me out to Mimi's house. Carmen was there to keep an eye on us, and she helped us slice some carrots into coin shapes. Then Gabi and I headed to the stable, where I introduced Gabi to Picasso.

Gabi was good with Picasso, and I could tell she

had been around horses before. After a few minutes, Gabi got down to business.

"OK, let's see if this works," she said. She touched Picasso lightly at the base of his neck with one finger. "I'm pretending to be a fly." Sure enough, Picasso dipped his nose toward his chest to brush the "fly" off. I heard a click, like an empty soda can when you press it with your thumb. After the click, Gabi gave Picasso a carrot.

Picasso munched his carrot coin thoughtfully, looking Gabi over. "What was that noise?" I asked.

"A clicker," said Gabi, holding up a small blue plastic box. Gabi touched Picasso's chest again. Dip, click, carrot. This time it looked like a nod, like a yes. "I'll click and give him a treat until he knows that's what the click means—a treat coming."

Touch, nod, click, carrot. Touch, nod, click, carrot. After a few repeats, Picasso dipped his nose when Gabi was still reaching, before she even touched him. He got a whole handful of carrot slices for that.

"Good boy," I said proudly, patting his neck.

"Wow, it worked!" Gabi said. "I wasn't sure."

"How do you know how to do this?" I asked.

"I like doing tricks," Gabi said. "I want to train animals and maybe even have my own show someday."

"Well you're definitely the star of this show!" I declared. "You and Picasso."

Suddenly, Gabi had an excited look on her face. "I have a brilliant idea. We should teach Picasso to paint!"

Brilliant, yes. Easy? No.

I wasn't sure how it would work, but I went into Mimi's studio to get art supplies. When I went back outside, Luis had joined Gabi in the corral. He helped us fasten a sketchpad to the fence. Then Gabi set up a card table in front of it and put out an old brush for painting window sashes.



Picasso's eyes brightened when he saw the setup. He pushed the brush around with his nose and then picked it up by the bristle end. It was sort of what we wanted, so Gabi clicked.

Picasso did it again, and again. But he wouldn't touch the brush handle—only the bristles.

"OK, I taught him the wrong thing," Gabi said. "We have to stop clicking him for that, even though he's trying."

That was difficult for all of us. Picasso bit the brush. He flapped it around by the bristles, harder and harder. "Should we stop?" I asked.

"Wait," said Gabi.

Waiting seemed easy for her, but Picasso and I were getting frustrated.

Click!

"What was that for?" I asked Gabi.

"He touched the handle with his lip," she said. "Watch him."

Picasso's silver-white whiskers hovered near the bristle end of the brush. I saw his ears swivel. Then his mouth opened, and he very deliberately bit the handle.

Click!

"Yay, Picasso!" said Gabi, feeding him a huge handful of carrots. She put the brush back on the table, and Picasso seized it with his mouth.

"Picasso, you're a genius," I said. "You too, Gabi. This is going to work!"

Once Picasso would hold the brush, Gabi gave him the cue to nod. That swished the brush up and down the paper, which promptly wrinkled and tore.

By now, Gabi and I were getting pretty good at problem solving. A clamp at the bottom of the sketchpad was the answer.

Next, it was time for paint. I brought out the finger paints Mimi had gotten for me when I was little. They're super-duper child-safe, made with

vegetable dyes. We dipped the brush in the blue paint and laid it on the table.

Picasso flared his nostrils and followed the paint smell to the bristle end of the brush, getting a huge blue smudge on his nose.

We washed him off and had him practice grabbing the right end of the brush a few more times, loaded it with paint again, and waited.

Confidently, Picasso seized the handle. He lifted the brush and swept it across the canvas, making a bold blue streak.

Click! Gabi reached for the brush as Picasso dropped it, handed him a carrot, and dipped another brush—in yellow paint. This time Picasso made a wispy zigzag. I offered him an orange-loaded brush, and he painted with that as well.

When I took the brush away, Picasso lifted his muzzle and sniffed his painting thoughtfully. He twitched his lip across the blue streak, making a smudge on it and giving himself a blue mustache.

Gabi collapsed, giggling. I washed off Picasso's muzzle and then carefully tore his painting off the sketchpad.

"How did he do?" asked Luis from beyond the fence.

I showed him the painting. "It's a Picasso original," I said proudly. "A true masterpiece." ★



Meet the Author



Jessie Haas

I grew up loving horses, drawing horses, riding horses, and reading every horse book I could find. It's no wonder that when I began writing, most of my 36 books turned out to be about horses!

For the Birds!

Create
“tweet” nests
to display
anywhere.

Loony Birds

Give friends daffy bird nests for their desks or lockers. Slip an oversized bird made from an extra-large pom-pom or a large wood bead into a dinky nest. Dress the bird in googly eyes and a paper beak. Add a magnetic strip to the base.

“Cheep” Gift

Attach a nest to a small wrapped gift. On the tag, write, “For one of my favorite peeps!”

Pen Perch

Attach the nest to the top of a pencil. Or, for a more realistic look, use a bark-covered pencil, available online. Let dry overnight.



Fowl Play

To keep your nature-loving doll safe from scratches, make her a bird's nest from paper. For a base, trim the brim off a mini straw hat (sold at craft stores), and glue tiny strips of paper inside. Let dry. Decorate with pom-pom chicks.

Reader's Roost

For a bookmark, glue a nest at the end of a very slim stick. Let dry overnight.

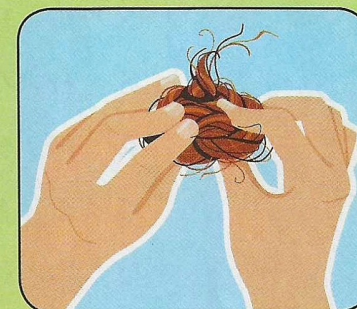
Make a Nest



1. Gather and twist strands of excelsior into a thin rope. The thinner the rope is, the smaller the nest will be. (Excelsior is decorative shredded wood fibers sold in craft, floral, and department stores.)



2. Wrap the rope around 1 or 2 fingers. The more wraps you have, the bigger the nest will be, but leave enough rope to tie it off.



3. Slip the ring off your finger, and then wrap the rope end around the ring and through the hole. Adjust the nest, and trim it.

Decorate It

For a base, glue a wood circle to the bottom of the nest. Glue artificial birds and bead eggs into the nest. ★

Bird Search

Look up, down, forward, backward, and diagonally to find the flock of birds hidden in this word search.

ostrich
cardinal
goose
seagull
eagle

toucan
penguin
flamingo
owl
pelican

parrot
robin
parakeet
swan
pigeon

G	F	T	A	E	L	G	A	E	I	B	R	H	S	C
B	Z	K	M	O	C	D	J	N	A	V	F	L	P	A
G	O	O	S	E	T	W	E	M	S	Q	C	X	O	R
R	S	A	V	G	L	V	C	P	L	W	O	Z	B	D
U	T	W	B	Q	R	Z	K	A	E	T	L	N	T	I
L	R	C	R	T	O	G	N	I	M	A	L	F	L	N
P	I	G	E	O	N	Z	Y	B	T	O	U	Z	C	A
S	C	P	T	A	B	Q	S	W	A	N	H	J	N	L
E	H	A	I	N	D	I	Y	O	E	C	A	R	M	B
A	M	R	B	T	U	L	N	A	C	I	L	E	P	X
G	E	A	L	O	P	E	N	G	U	I	N	A	Q	S
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L	H	E	I	A	Y	Q	E	G	O	S	W	A	C	I
J	N	T	F	N	X	B	D	T	I	G	L	N	S	V

✂ Posters Carefully cut along the dotted lines to remove your posters. ★

Friends Fur-ever!



Photo: Steven Talley

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HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I love animals! But both of my parents are allergic, so I can't get a pet. I had a fish, but that's really not the same as a cuddly kitten.

Pet Wanter

Sure, fish aren't too cuddly. But some furry creatures don't produce many allergens, and there are other types of pets, too. Your parents can check with a doctor to see if any are safe. Also, if you can't have a cat at home, ask your parents if you could help out at an animal shelter. That way, you'd have lots of furry friends who need your friendship, too.



Dear American Girl,

All my friends tease me about loving ballet so much. It's getting so bad that I'm thinking of quitting my classes.

Quit?

Make sure you don't talk about ballet *all* the time—it could be that your friends are just trying to change the subject. But do not quit ballet, and don't let your friends keep teasing you, either. Try this: "Ballet is important to me, and it hurts when you tease me. Please stop." Ask your friends for their support, and make sure you offer the same for the things they love.



Dear American Girl,

I hear that it's good to keep a journal, and I want to write in one every day. But I have no idea what to actually write.

Journal dud

To get started, don't feel that you have to write anything. Sketch something you saw. Tape in a ticket stub or a leaf you found, or jot down some song lyrics you heard. And when you've got something you need to get out, then you can write it down, knowing that your journal is always there to listen to whatever you have to say, even when you don't say it with words.



Dear American Girl,

My friends get mad at me, saying that I try to take over everything. Trouble is, they're right. How can I be less bossy?

The Big Boss

Try asking questions in place of making statements. Instead of, "We're meeting by the benches after lunch," try, "What do you all want to do after lunch?" When you ask others what they want instead of telling them what to do, you'll instantly seem less bossy. That doesn't mean you can't have an opinion. It just means that yours is not the *only* opinion.



MORE HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I care a lot about endangered animals and the environment, but nobody seems to understand how important it is. How can I make them get it?

Recycler

Not everyone will share your passion, but that's OK. Focus on how you can help. Learn about what kinds of problems there are in your town or state, and see if you and your family can join a group that is working to fix them. Or start an earth club at your school—check with the principal's office about ways you can make a difference for the earth.



Dear American Girl,

My mom wants me to be good at singing. I want that, too. But I HATE practicing. It takes me away from my friends and fun stuff I want to do.

Off Key

If you really want to be a good singer, you know you've got to practice. Ask your mom to help you make up a schedule that will allow

for practice time as well as fun and friends. Look for ways to make practice fun, too. Singing silly songs and tongue-twisters is still good training for your voice.



Dear American Girl,

My family likes to go out to eat. But when it comes to choosing something to order, I am the worst! I always end up deciding at the last minute and ending up with something I don't like.

Fast Food



The trick is to plan ahead. Many restaurants have menus available online, so ask a parent to help you find the menu of the place where you're eating before you leave. That way, you'll know what to expect, and you'll have plenty of time to make a decision. Once you've made a few successful orders, you'll start to know what you really like. And ordering will get easier.



Dear American Girl,

I am really, really busy with school and everything. It's making me feel horrible because I don't give my dog enough attention.

What can I do?

Just as you save time for meals, homework, and sleep, schedule some time every day to play with your dog—such as right after dinner. Even a few minutes a day can make a difference in your dog's health and happiness. Plus, playing with your dog can help relieve the stress of your busy schedule, so it'll be good for you, too.



even
MORE HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I'm too shy to invite my friends to come over. I like it when they invite me, and I always say yes, but I can't figure out how to ask them back.

hi

Next time a friend invites you over, listen to the exact words she uses. That way, you'll know just what to say when you want to invite her back. Practice in a mirror or with a parent, and then go for it. Try not to worry—after all, your friends invite you, so they obviously like you and want to hang out!

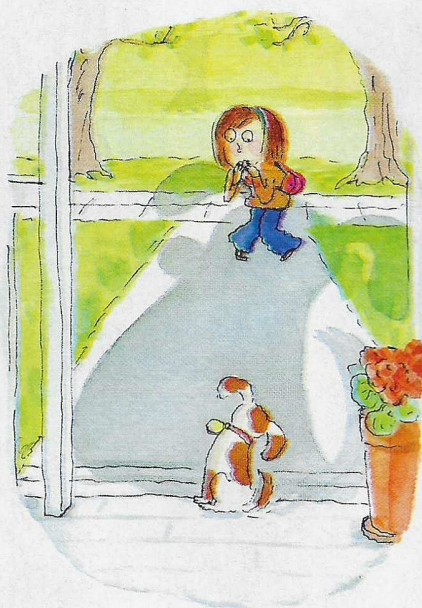


Dear American Girl,

I am very scared of dogs, but all of my friends have them. I get really nervous about going over to their houses. How can I get over this?

Dog jitters

When you want to get close to a dog, always ask the owner's permission. Then start slowly. Toss a treat to her from far away, and let her come to you. Don't look in her eyes (that can threaten her), and



talk in soothing tones. Let her sniff your hand, and then pet her gently under the chin and work up to pet her back. Hang in there for a few moments, and then take a break—you can do it longer next time. Once you're comfortable with one dog, you might feel better around others. Good luck—life will be less ruff for you if you can beat this fear.



Dear American Girl,

I made a huge mistake at school, and nothing I do is helping me to forget it. I feel horrible.

Help!

You know that nobody's perfect. The fact is, you're supposed to make mistakes—that's the way you learn how to do things the best

way. It might feel like your mistake is your whole life right now, but it's really not. Your life is a huge collection of lots of experiences—many of them good—so try to remember that this one mistake doesn't define you. Figure out the lesson you can learn, learn it, and then move on. That way, the mistake becomes just another thing that happened a while back.



Advice from You

"If you try out for a group, such as a sports team, and you don't make it, don't get down on yourself. It doesn't mean you're bad. It just means that you're not ready. Practice, and try again next year."

Katharine P.
Age 10, Virginia

Need advice? Got advice? Write:
Help!

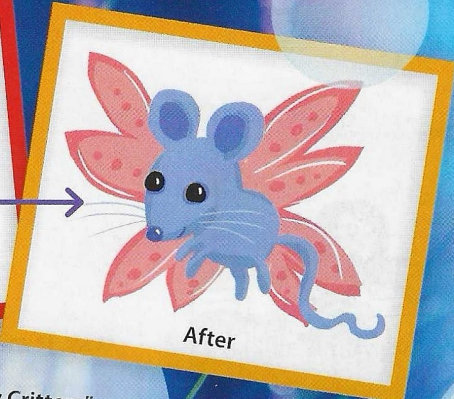
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Ella S.'s "Mousefly"



Before



After

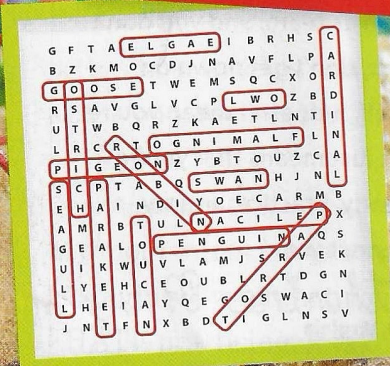
For our "Kooky Critters" contest, illustrator Lauren Scheuer created drawings inspired by the winners' ideas.

To see more creatures dreamed up by girls like you, visit **americangirl.com/playmagazine**

Behind the Scenes

Fluffy or scaly, big or small—at *American Girl*, we love them all!

AG's Puzzle Page Answers:



Our cover
model, Maya,
gets a puppy
kiss!



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playmagazine**
to design your own
adorable puppy
posters.

The whale
and fish needed
help swimming,
so we used clear
string to hold
them up.



We created a home under the sea for our Petite Pets! The stylists blew bubbles to make it look like a real ocean scene.

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Hang our *pretty posters* anywhere
you need a pick-me-up!

A close-up photograph of a horse's face, focusing on its eyes and nose. The horse has a white mane that falls over its forehead. The background is blurred, showing hints of green and brown.

Stop and look around



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Dance

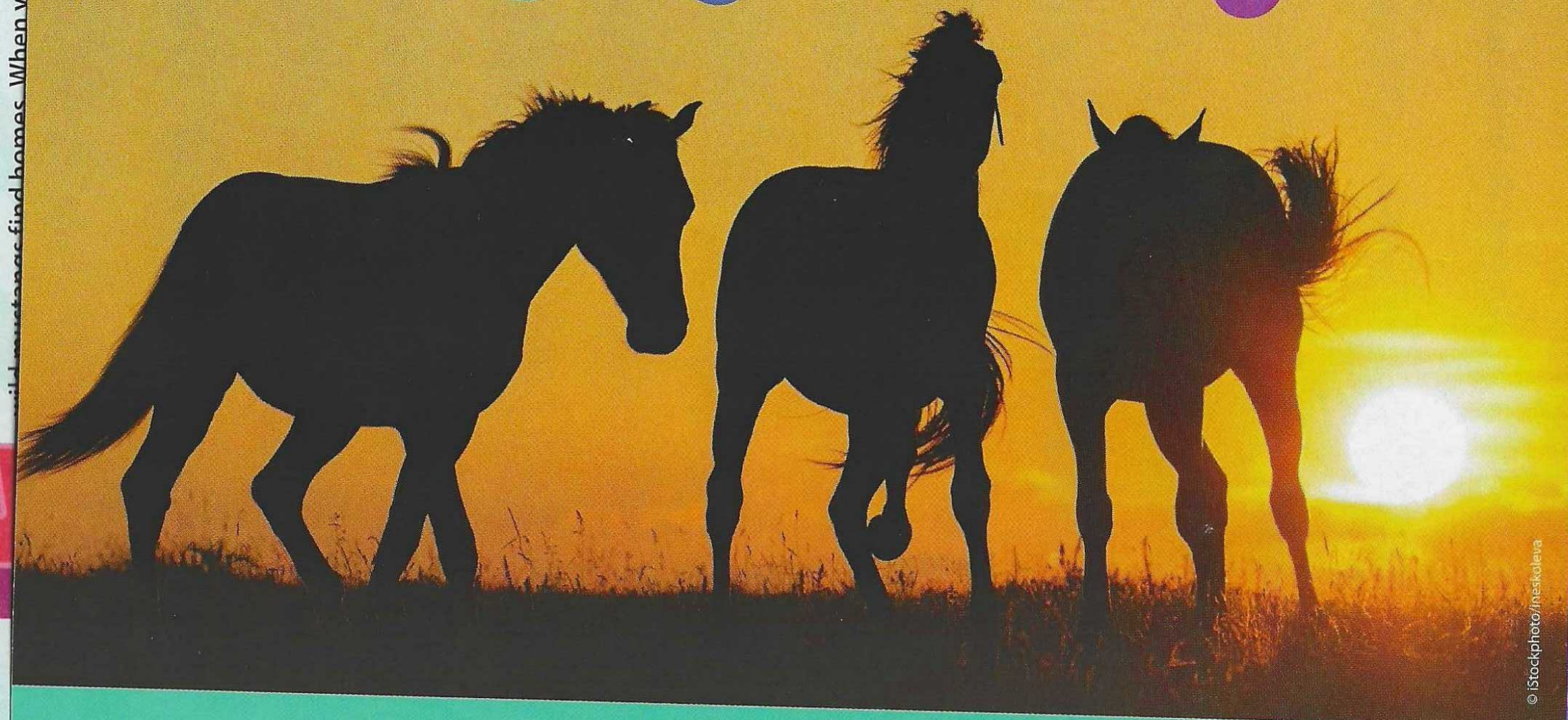


Like no one is watching



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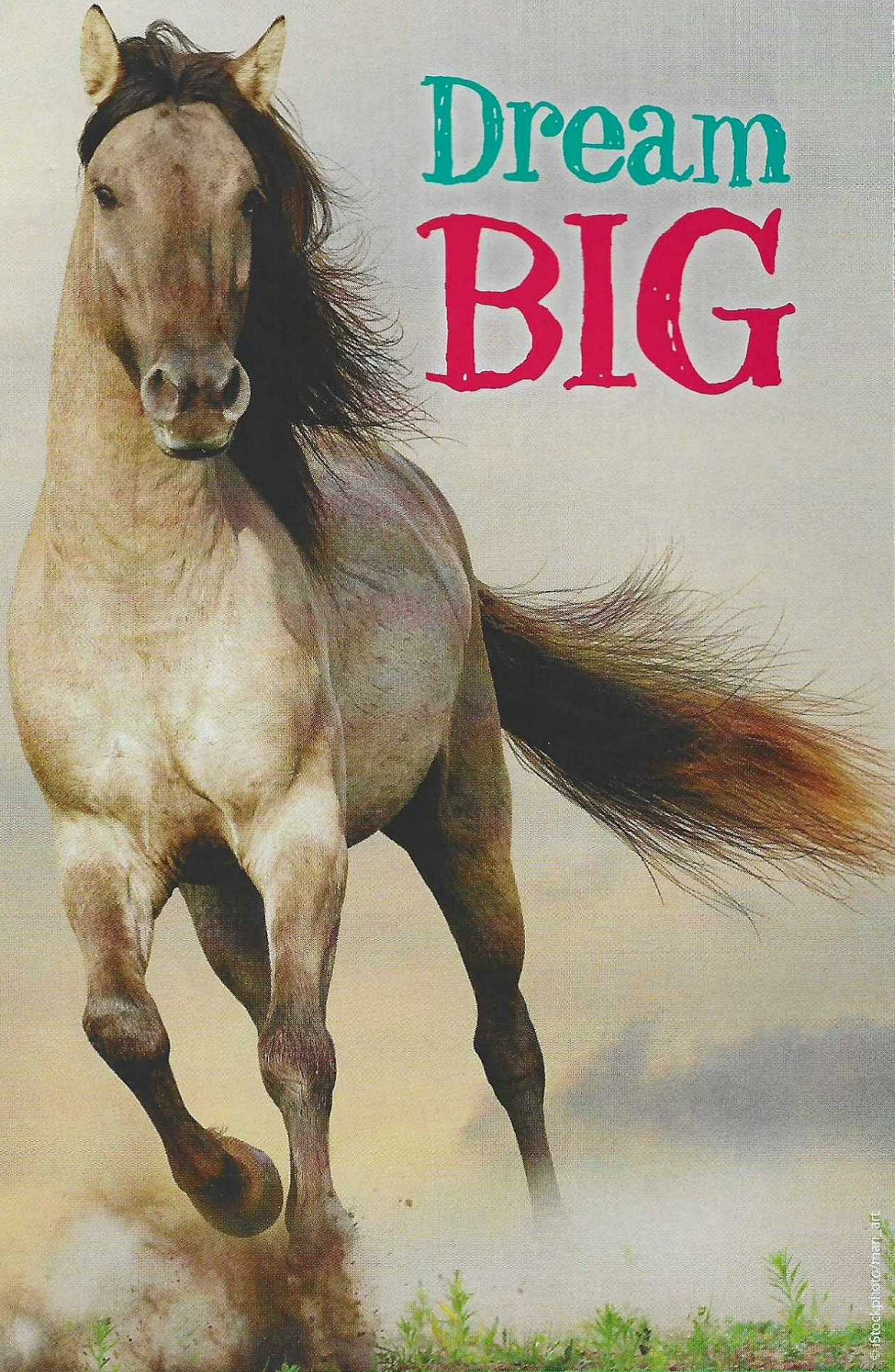
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Love
your
friends



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Think



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All heart



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Young
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free



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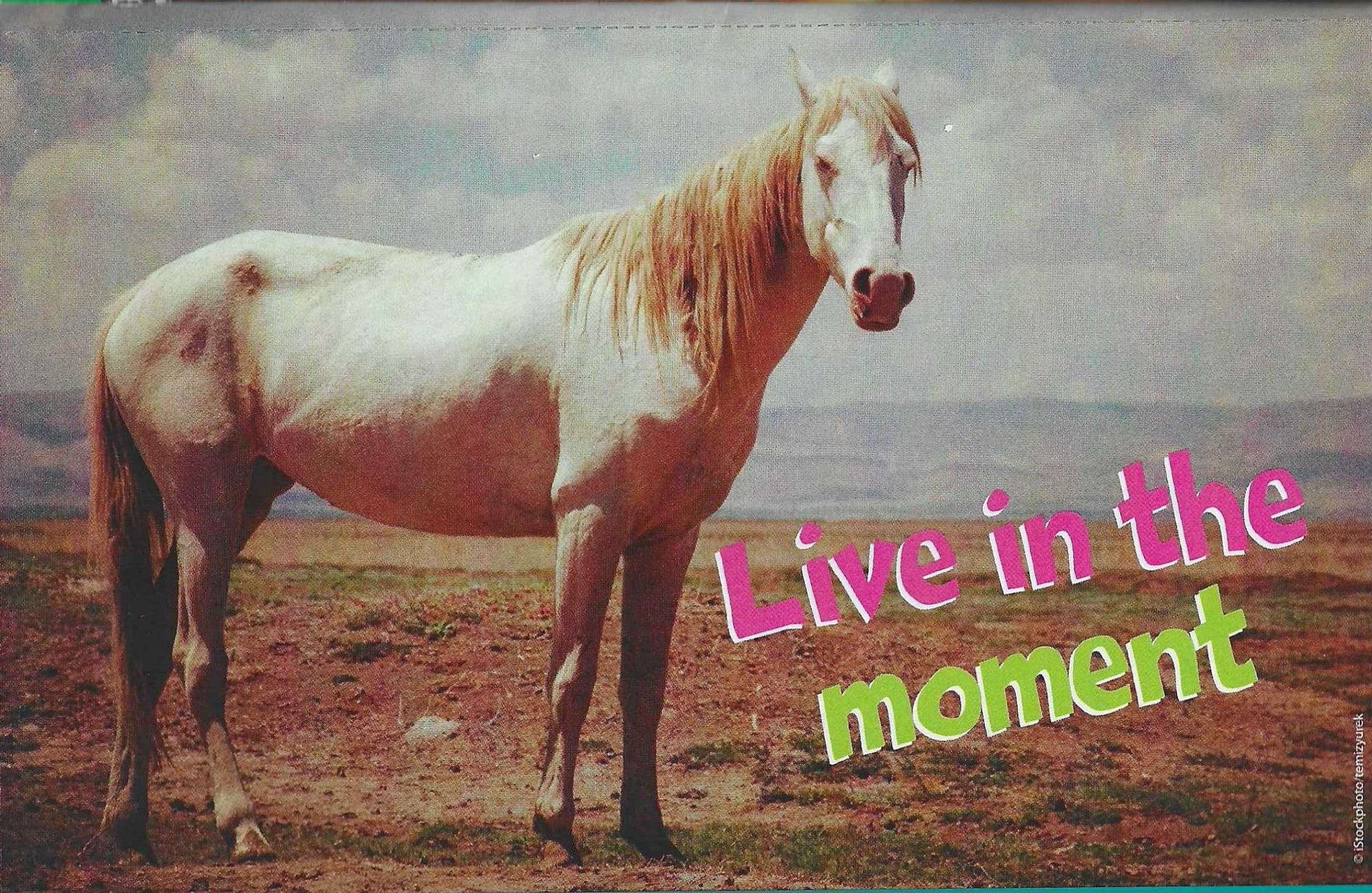
Be strong



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Live in the
moment

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Be at peace



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A photograph of a brown horse in profile, facing right, in a green field. The background shows rolling hills with autumn-colored trees under a blue sky with white clouds. The text "Enjoy the world" is overlaid in a stylized font.

*Enjoy the
world*

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Listen to
your
heart



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